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By: **Delegate Rosenberg**

Introduced and read first time: February 13, 2004

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Marriage Promotion Act of 2004**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Marriage Promotion Program and the Marriage  
4 Promotion Fund to be administered by the Department of Human Resources;  
5 establishing the purpose of the Marriage Promotion Program; establishing that  
6 the Marriage Promotion Fund consists of certain money; authorizing certain  
7 community-based organizations to apply for a marriage promotion grant;  
8 requiring a Marriage Promotion Program proposal to contain certain plans and  
9 a certain description; requiring certain entities that receive certain funding to  
10 provide domestic violence counseling services; establishing certain  
11 responsibilities of the Department of Human Resources in administering the  
12 Marriage Promotion Program; prohibiting the Child Support Enforcement  
13 Administration from taking any action to collect certain child support  
14 arrearages if the child support obligor and obligee reunite under certain  
15 circumstances; requiring the Department of Human Resources to submit a  
16 certain annual report; requiring the Department of Human Resources, in  
17 consultation with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, to conduct a  
18 certain study and submit a certain report by a certain date; defining certain  
19 terms; and generally relating to establishing the Marriage Promotion Program  
20 and the Marriage Promotion Fund.

21 BY adding to

22 Article 88A - Department of Human Resources  
23 Section 146 through 152 to be under the new subtitle "Marriage Promotion  
24 Program"  
25 Annotated Code of Maryland  
26 (2003 Replacement Volume)

27 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

28 Article - Family Law  
29 Section 10-112  
30 Annotated Code of Maryland  
31 (1999 Replacement Volume and 2003 Supplement)

1 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
2 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

3 **Article 88A - Department of Human Resources**

4 MARRIAGE PROMOTION PROGRAM

5 146.

6 (A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS  
7 INDICATED.

8 (B) "COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION" MEANS A COMMUNITY-BASED  
9 ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES SERVICES TO HELP DEVELOP MARRIAGE AND  
10 RELATIONSHIP SKILLS.

11 (C) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES.

12 (D) "PROGRAM" MEANS THE MARRIAGE PROMOTION PROGRAM.

13 147.

14 (A) THERE IS A MARRIAGE PROMOTION PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE  
15 DEPARTMENT.

16 (B) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE FUNDING TO ELIGIBLE  
17 COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING A MARRIAGE AND  
18 RELATIONSHIP SKILLS PROGRAM.

19 148.

20 (A) THERE IS A MARRIAGE PROMOTION FUND IN THE DEPARTMENT.

21 (B) THE MARRIAGE PROMOTION FUND SHALL CONSIST OF AT LEAST \$250,000  
22 IN GENERAL FUNDS.

23 149.

24 (A) A COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION MAY APPLY FOR A MARRIAGE  
25 PROMOTION GRANT UNDER THIS SECTION FOR ANY FISCAL YEAR BY SUBMITTING A  
26 PROGRAM PROPOSAL TO THE DEPARTMENT BY MAY 1.

27 (B) A PROGRAM PROPOSAL SHALL CONTAIN:

28 (1) A PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING A MARRIAGE AND COMMUNICATION  
29 SKILLS PROGRAM OR A DESCRIPTION OF AN EXISTING MARRIAGE AND  
30 COMMUNICATION SKILLS PROGRAM;

31 (2) A PLAN TO ADOPT A MARRIAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS  
32 CURRICULUM THAT EMPHASIZES RELATIONSHIP SKILLS INCLUDING

1 COMMUNICATION AND NEGOTIATION SKILLS THAT ARE NECESSARY TO RESOLVE  
2 COMMON RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS;

3 (3) A DESCRIPTION OF ANY MODEL CURRICULUM THAT THE  
4 COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION PLANS TO USE TO PROVIDE MARRIAGE AND  
5 COMMUNICATION SKILLS; AND

6 (4) A PLAN TO INCORPORATE DISCUSSIONS OF FAMILY LAW AND  
7 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ISSUES INTO THE CURRICULUM.

8 150.

9 (A) IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ADMINISTERING THE  
10 PROGRAM, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:

11 (1) REVIEW PLANS SUBMITTED BY COMMUNITY-BASED  
12 ORGANIZATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM AND DETERMINE WHICH  
13 COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FUNDING;

14 (2) REVIEW RENEWAL APPLICATIONS FROM PARTICIPATING  
15 COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS; AND

16 (3) DISTRIBUTE GRANTS TO ELIGIBLE COMMUNITY-BASED  
17 ORGANIZATIONS.

18 151.

19 AN ENTITY THAT RECEIVES FUNDING UNDER THE PROGRAM CREATED UNDER  
20 THIS SUBTITLE OR UNDER THE FEDERAL HEALTHY MARRIAGE INITIATIVE SHALL  
21 ENSURE THAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNSELING SERVICES ARE PROVIDED TO  
22 INDIVIDUALS IN THE ENTITY'S PROGRAM.

23 152.

24 NOTHING IN THIS SUBTITLE PREVENTS A COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION  
25 FROM OBTAINING FUNDING FROM A PRIVATE SOURCE.

26 **Article - Family Law**

27 10-112.

28 (a) (1) [If] SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, IF the  
29 Administration considers it to be in the best interest of this State, in a case in which  
30 an assignment has been made under Article 88A, § 50(b)(2) of the Code, the  
31 Administration may accept in full settlement of an arrearage in child support  
32 payments an amount that is less than the total arrearage.

33 (2) IF ARREARAGES ACCRUE AFTER AN ASSIGNMENT HAS BEEN MADE  
34 UNDER ARTICLE 88A, § 50(B)(2) OF THE CODE AND THE OBLIGOR AND OBLIGEE  
35 SUBSEQUENTLY REUNITE, THE ADMINISTRATION MAY NOT TAKE ANY ACTION TO

1 COLLECT THE SUPPORT ARREARAGES UNLESS THE REUNITED FAMILY HAS A GROSS  
2 INCOME EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN 225 PERCENT OF THE FEDERAL POVERTY  
3 LEVEL, AS DEFINED BY THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN  
4 SERVICES.

5 (b) On request of the Administration, a court may approve by order an amount  
6 that is less than the total arrearage as full settlement of the arrearage.

7 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Department of  
8 Human Resources shall report to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and the  
9 House Appropriations Committee on or before July 1 of each year, in accordance with  
10 § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, on the marriage promotion programs  
11 granted funding under this Act, including an evaluation of the effectiveness of the  
12 programs in promoting marriage in the State.

13 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Department of  
14 Human Resources, in consultation with the Department of Health and Mental  
15 Hygiene, shall study the effectiveness of publicly-funded family planning programs,  
16 teen pregnancy prevention programs, and community, school, and faith-based  
17 abstinence education programs on preventing unwed pregnancy and unwed  
18 childbearing. The Department shall report to the Senate Budget and Taxation  
19 Committee and the House Appropriations Committee on or before October 1, 2005, in  
20 accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, on the findings of the  
21 study.

22 SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take  
23 effect July 1, 2004.